

No Room for Democracy in the Arms Bazaar: U.S. Arms Transfers in the Middle East and North Africa

By

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Abstract

Over 27% of arms transfers between 2000 and 2013 from the United States to other nations were to the Middle East North Africa region. The region contains few democracies, is largely composed of nations that are considered not free, and tend to be at the epicenter of negative events that can have global effects. Previous research has analyzed U.S. arms sales to other nations in an attempt to understand U.S. motives, but has been limited by not specifically addressing the MENA region. Why do we see such a large percentage of U.S. arms being sold in the region? The research uses data from SIPRI, the World Bank, and various U.S. governmental departments to analyze the level of arms transfers, trade, liberties, and security agreements in the region in an attempt to identify any correlations that may explain such high arms transfer levels. The findings suggest that there is no significant correlation between democracy and freedoms with arms sales in the region contesting previous broader studies. The data does suggest that there are specific U.S. security-arrangements in the region coupled with trade relationships that may contribute to the large number of arms transfers in the region.

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Section 1: Introduction

Over 28% of arms transfers from the United States between the years 2000-2013 are to nations that comprise the region known as MENA, or the Middle East and North Africa. This is approximately \$28 billion USD of the \$97.5 billion USD worth of total arms transfers worldwide (SIPRI 2014). Another way to look at it is that over a quarter of U.S. arms transfers are conducted with 15% of recipients. Why do we see this high percentage of arms transfers go to such a low percentage of the potential recipients?

The U.S. signed an \$11 billion USD arms deal with Qatar in 2014 (Reuters/Stringer 2014) despite controversial accusations that Qatar has ties with Islamic extremist groups that are a threat to U.S. interests and security. The agreement included the transfer of sophisticated Apache attack helicopters, Patriot air defense systems, and Javelin missile systems (Mazzetti 2015). More significant perhaps, is that states in the Middle East region are frequently using the weapons the U.S. sells them instead of merely stockpiling them.

The MENA region has been a contentious one over the past decades. The Arab Spring, the rise of the Islamic State (IS), the Syrian Civil War, unrest and violence in Libya, the spread of terrorist organizations in North Africa, and the Houthi uprising in Yemen have contributed to maintaining a state of turmoil over the past years. Saudi Arabia is using F-15 fighter jets bought from Boeing to bomb Houthi rebels in Yemen, while the United Arab Emirates are flying F-16 fighter jets bought from Lockheed Martin to bomb both Yemen and Syria (Mazzetti 2015). The Kingdom of Jordan has joined other Arab countries, including Bahrain and the afore mentioned nations of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, in battling Islamic State forces in Syria, in retaliation to the burning of their downed pilot earlier this year. Jordan is requesting more military support and munitions from the United States in order to escalate their participation in

bombing IS. The U.S. and Jordan signed a new memorandum of understanding in February that committed the U.S. to increase its military assistance, including the transfer of arms, from \$660 million USD a year to \$1 billion USD per year for 2015-2017 (Stewart 2015). The U.S. is providing its MENA allies, almost all non-democratic, with the means to exercise conflict on one another.

The ongoing nuclear discussions between Iran and the P5+1 countries have contributed to tensions in the region as well. Sectarianism between Arab Sunni states and Shia Iran has been argued as cause for instability within the Middle East region, both sides fearing increased Iranian regional influence. Some of the arms transfers between the U.S. and Middle East countries can be viewed as an attempt on part of Sunni nations to bolster their own security against an Iranian threat, real or imagined.

This is in addition to the lack of an Israeli/Palestinian two-state solution that has been viewed as a major source of the instability in the region. The plight of the Palestinians residing in Gaza and the Occupied Territories is oft cited as the reason/excuse for terrorist activities aimed at the U.S. because of its support to the State of Israel (Mearsheimer and Walt 2006). The undisclosed fact that Israel is the only nation in the region to possess nuclear weapons can be attributed to the desire of Muslim nations to increase their military posture as a counter to Israel.

With all the conflict and instability in the MENA region, why would the U.S. sell arms to nations that have questionable ties to terrorism, isn't a partner in a Collective Defense Agreement (CDA), or share in similar form of representative democracy? There are limited democratic governments in the region, not counting Turkey, which is a member of the North Atlantic Trade Organization (NATO). This is an important question to explore in order to understand why the U.S. executes arms transfers.

One can demonstrate that during the Cold War the U.S. sold arms to nations for security and/or denying the spread of communism (Meernik et al. 1998; Pierre 1981; Kemp 1994). Arms transfers were part of bilateral security agreements or arrangements among multilateral security institutions, such as NATO. U.S. arms transfers have increased since the end of the Cold War, especially to the MENA region. Unlike NATO countries, more than a quarter of the arms transfers go to a region that is less stable and primarily ruled by autocratic governments. This spurred the research question: Does the level of U.S. arms transfers influence security agreements in the MENA region?

There has been an increased U.S. military presence in the Middle East since 2001. Much of this is due to the War on Terror and Overseas Contingency Operations since the 9/11 attacks. However, there is also a significant U.S. military presence spread across the globe, especially amongst countries that it sells arms to. The increased “footprint” of the U.S. military in the Middle East lends credence to the assumption that the U.S. has a security interest in the region. Additionally, many countries in the Middle East have rich oil and natural gas deposits that are vital to the global economy. Political, security, and/or economic reasons may lie behind the U.S. transferring arms.

U.S. arms transfers fall under the Security Assistance (SA) Programs outlined in the Security Assistance Management Manual (Agency 2015). SA is a group of programs ranging from military education and training to providing defense articles, such as arms, to foreign nations. SA Programs are administered by the Department of State (DoS) and the Department of Defense (DoD). SA falls under the broader realm of Security Cooperation (SC). SC includes all DoD interactions with foreign defense and security establishments. Its purpose is to build a defense and security relationship, promote U.S. security interests, develop allied and friendly

military capabilities, and provide U.S. forces with access to host nations if needed. The DoD considers SC as an integrally important tool of national security and foreign policy (Agency 2015).

SC and SA Programs are diplomatic tools that are used by the DoS and DoD to achieve certain goals that fall under the security and political realms. International Relations Theories are typically used to analyze observed trends in foreign policy. A high amount of arms transfers correlated with high trade volume, democratic governments, and civil liberties would concur with classical neo-liberal theory. On the other hand, a high amount of arms transfers correlated with security agreements, military bases, and military alliances would concur with neo-realist theory.

A regional level of analysis of the MENA allows for the study of possible regional trends. There are not enough cases for a regression model, however there is enough data available to establish any possible correlations between arms transfers, trade, civil liberties, regime type, and security agreements in the region. The data suggests a stronger argument for the neo-realist theory than that of the neo-liberal. Democracy and liberties similar to that of the U.S. appears not to play a role in the decision to transfer arms to the MENA region. Security agreements between recipient nations and the U.S. do suggest a more plausible reason for the amount of arms that are transferred. Additionally, trade relationships between the region and the U.S. may also influence the decision to transfer arms, but the degree of influence is uncertain.

This paper will proceed with a review of the literature relating to arms transfers. Then, a discussion of international relations theories and how they may apply to arms transfers in the MENA region. Following this, I discuss the research method and varying hypothesis related with neo-liberal theory and neo-realist theory. Afterwards, I present my empirical evidence and

data analysis and discuss my findings. The paper concludes by returning to the original research question and summarizing my findings and contribution.

Section 2: Literature Review

The literature concerning arms transfers is limited, however expands when including military and foreign aid. This is acceptable as arms transfers can fall under either heading as well as stand alone as a variable. The majority of the literature tends to support one of two primary IR theories: neo-realist or neo-liberal. Some scholars believe that human rights, democratic governance, and trade positively affect the decision of the U.S. to trade arms with another nation, supporting a neo-liberal view. Other scholars contend that these things have nothing to do with the U.S.'s decision to trade arms. Rather, security and military agreements are the main factors driving the decision by the U.S. to trade arms with other nations, supporting a neo-realist view. The literature concentrates on these factors that are associated with the theories. Each scholar does not always include each variable within their work, but they contribute to the argument of what may drive U.S. arms transfers to other nations. The literature attempts to explain the reasons for arms transfers by focusing on the aforementioned factors.

Democracy and Human Rights:

Neo-liberals may view that the respect for human rights and democratic governance are important concerns in U.S. foreign policy. These two factors encompass civil liberty pre-requisites, or pre-conditions, of a developed and modern nation state. The U.S., and other democracies, has a more robust and positive foreign policy with nations that are similar to it. Arms transfers and military aid have been identified as tools of foreign policy. Several scholars have debated the importance of human rights and democratic governments on providing military

assistance and arms to other nations. The Carter and Reagan administrations, for example, took into consideration the human rights abuses of prospective arms buying nations and often decided not to sell those nations arms (Poe 1991). Poe bases his conclusions by analyzing a random sample of military aid recipients during both administrations. Human rights and democracy continued to be relevant determinants after the Cold War when assessing the eligibility of a country to receive U.S. military aid in the form of arms exports. Developing countries with a good human rights score and the highest democracy score were 22% more likely to receive arms using a regression model of 92 countries between the years 1990-1994 (Blanton 2000). Of significance however, is that her findings suggested that the Middle East is somewhat of an outlier as the roles of democracy and human rights are unclear when deciding to export arms to the region. In a later study, Blanton (2005) again uses a regression model, and extends her focused research between the years 1981-2001. Her findings suggest that human rights played a larger role in determining which countries receive arms post Cold War, however the democratic institutions in the recipient countries had only a small, yet positive, influence. In fact, while a country was 11% less likely to receive arms for every unit increase in repressiveness, a one-point increase in democracy corresponded to a 25% decrease in the amount of arms exported (Blanton 2005). The studies are consistent with a neo-liberal approach and suggests that a recipient nation's civil liberties, in the form of a democratic government and a positive human rights record, influences the U.S.'s decision to conduct arms transfers and supply military aid.

There is another argument however that diminishes the importance of democracy and human rights when observing U.S. arms transfers. Other literature supports a neo-realist view by suggesting that human rights and democratic governance played a minimal, if any, role in determining which nations receive arms and foreign aid. A similar model to the one used by

Blanton, but including a larger sample of countries, argues that human rights abusing countries are actually more likely to receive weapons from the U.S. and that military alliances play a larger role in determining arms transfers (Perkins and Neumayer 2010). Perkins and Neumayer found that military alliances and recipient nations' military capacity were more positively and statistically significantly correlated with arms transfers than were human rights and democratic governance. Similar trends were found during the 1980s when analyzing foreign aid to African nations. Human rights played a minimal role, while security alliances played a pivotal role, in determining U.S. foreign aid allocations to African countries (Schraeder et al. 1998). A more recent study found that the top ten recipients of U.S. weapons in 2011 were all cited for significant human rights shortcomings by the DoS, including the use of U.S. weapons for repressive uses against their own populations (Toombs and Smith 2012). Arms transfers and military aid to the MENA region have not been significantly addressed to determine the influence of human rights records and democratic governments on the U.S. decision to provide said arms. There are noticeable disagreements on the importance of human rights and democracy in both Cold War and post-Cold war periods.

Economic Interests and Trade:

Many scholars view arms transfers, and the arms trade in general, as a result of a growing globalized economy. In essence, arms transfers have a positive effect on the domestic and global economy. Weapons-supplying countries have become more economically focused when transferring arms since the end of the Cold War, no longer gifting weaponry, but focusing on selling arms (Peleg 1977). It is argued that once held U.S. military secrets are now being sold off to foreign nations due to the crossover of technologies between military and civilian hardware and the growing international market, leading to an technological interdependence that

benefits both sides (Keller and Nolan 1997). This trend is not only U.S. specific, but is also observed in Russia and former states of the Soviet Union. Maintaining the domestic arms industry in a post-Cold War environment drove the U.S. to seek out willing buyers in order to secure jobs and production rates, despite recipient nations' human rights records (Yanik 2006). The arms market in general has shifted from a single-country production pattern to a multi-national global enterprise that becomes interdependent on international cooperation (Bitzinger 1994; Brooks 2005). Arms are no longer planned, manufactured, and solely used by the producing country. Transnational research and production agreements resulted in a proliferation of weapons technology and manufacturing. It is even argued that arms transfers lead to weapons standardization, which in turn leads to increased trade liberalization between the producer and the recipient (Wolf and Leebaert 1978). Additionally, a regression model of developing countries receiving arms exhibited a greater probability of receiving arms if they were viewed as important trading partners (Perkins and Neumayer 2010). The previous examples illustrate a growing economic benefit for both the U.S. domestic economy and the international economy.

Other scholars suggest that the economic benefit, especially domestically, is limited and insignificant. A regression analysis of time-series for five arms exporting countries found that there was little economic benefit to exporters compared to strategic and security benefits (Fontanel et al. 1985). Fontanel's study is a little outdated, but did argue that economic lobbies which formed due to arms transfers made an unsubstantiated argument that arms transfers have a positive economic impact on the exporting country. This may explain some other scholars' attempts at suggesting that trade and arms sales are positively correlated. Studying arms exports under the Clinton administration found similar results, suggesting that arms exports only marginally contribute to national employment and trade domestically; the job production was

more noticeable outside of the U.S. due to a growing global economy (Hartung 1995). The global production trend does little to stimulate the domestic economy. Laborers and manufacturing plants in other nations are benefiting from U.S. arms contractors instead of local workers and plants. The arguments on economic benefits and the growing global economy are varied. Scholarly work has not attempted to correlate arms transfers with trade directly. The literature is lacking due to this, specifically when analyzing the MENA region separate from other regions in order to determine any significance between trade and arms transfers.

Security and Political Interests:

Scholars agree that security and political interests play a role in arms transfers. They disagree on how arms transfers and the arms industry affect security and political interests and how significant of a role they play. A neo-liberal view suggests that an increased global arms industry creates a interdependence amongst nations for weapons production, which in turn leads to increasing the cost of armed conflict amongst one another, and thus creates a more secure global environment from which to operate within (Brooks 2005). This argument was presented after analyzing the growing transnationalism of multinational corporations and the interdependency created by the global arms market. Blanton (2005) suggests a more realist view by admitting that countries where U.S. troops were present were not only more likely to receive arms, but also likely to receive greater amounts. This finding supports a view that U.S. security is a vital element when electing to transfer arms to other nations by ensuring that the host nation has the interoperability capabilities with U.S. weapons and systems.

Political and security interests in the MENA region are also accomplished by providing conventional arms and technologies to both Israel and Muslim states in order to ensure that a balance of power exists, along with ensuring internal stability within MENA regimes (Neumann

1995). The provision of arms enforces the regimes' internal security while at the same time allowing them the ability to project power against a superiorly equipped Israel. Promoting and securing U.S. interests were instrumental in determining whether countries received arms after the 1991 Gulf War, specifically when focused on the "trinity of interests" comprising Middle East peace, Israeli and friendly Arab national security, and access to energy sources (Hajjar 2002). Arms transfers and defense cooperative agreements were used as diplomatic tools to ensure that the U.S.'s interests were addressed and secured. Security and political interests are definitely tied to U.S. arms transfers, however, its impact is not clear. There is still debate on whether securing U.S. interests is the driving force in helping to arm the MENA region. The majority of the works cited have used specific case studies to argue their points using qualitative data rather than quantitative.

There has been scholarly work that denounces the notion that arms transfers, or any interaction with and towards foreign nations, have a positive effect on security and political interests. A regression analysis of countries receiving U.S. arms and military support and acts of terror against the U.S. originating from those countries demonstrate that there is a correlation between the two. In short, the more a country is dependent on the U.S. for arms and military support, the more likely that the U.S. and its citizens will be targets of acts of terror (Neumayer and Pluempner 2011). Another study finds that states with active foreign policies with the U.S., to include military and economic alliances, are more likely to experience incidents of transnational terror than states that are not as involved in international affairs (Savun and Phillips 2009). These studies suggest that security and political interests would actually diminish with increased involvement through trade and arms transfers, not increase.

Contribution:

The literature is extensive and covers many different aspects associated with arms transfers in general. The scholars who have used empirical evidence have used large n regression analysis to attempt to identify trends tied to arms transfers and foreign aid to be applied on a global scale. Other scholars have used case studies to attempt to find a correlation between arms transfers and other aspects, to include civil liberties, trade, or security. The available literature lacks an analysis of all the factors focusing specifically on the MENA region and attempting to explain why over a quarter of U.S. arms transfers are to that specific region. The analysis is either too broad or not broad enough, in that it only looks at one specific factor. A regional level of analysis allows for the study of regional trends that can be observed and compared. Focusing on the MENA region and identifying any correlations between arms transfers, trade, security agreements and civil liberties may provide a stronger argument for which factor has a greater influence on transferring arms to the region.

Section 3: Theory

Arms transfers fall into the realm of foreign policy according to the Defense Security Cooperation Agency. International relations theory can help policy makers make sense of the information that bombards them on a daily basis. “Even policymakers who are contemptuous of “theory” must rely on their own, often unstated, ideas about how the world works in order to decide what to do.” (Walt 1998). My research will apply theoretical assumptions in order to “understand” trends and correlations that are observed when analyzing arms transfers in the Middle East region.

Two of the prevailing international relations theories are the neo-realist theory and the neo-liberal theory. David Baldwin (1993) brought together scholars to discuss some of the key debates of both theories consisting of topics such as relative vs. absolute gains, international cooperation, and the nature and consequences of anarchy. The arguments are vast and there are many different aspects and factors that each theory attempts to explain or understand. In relation to arms transfers some broad inferences can be made based upon neo-realist and neo-liberal theory. A neo-realist may view arms transfers to other nations as an attempt to ensure the security of the state by expanding the capabilities of other nations who assist in ensuring the transferring nation's security. Self-preservation and security are the primary factors that would influence the transfer of arms. However, a neo-liberal may view arms transfers as a natural result of an expanding and interdependent international trade relationship. As trade increases with a recipient nation, so would arms transfers. Another neo-liberal view would be that arms transfers are a natural result of the U.S. acknowledging, and rewarding, other nations who have similar political institutions and values. The more similar the recipient nation appears to be in those regards with the U.S., the more likely they would be to receive arms as a tool of trade and cooperation.

This research attempts to focus on some of the more specific assumptions made by other scholars related to the theories. For this purpose, assumptions made by Blanton (2000, 2005) and by Perkins and Neumayer (2010) are referenced concerning the two theories and how they apply to arms transfers. Blanton's research suggests that the U.S. takes a country's human rights record and form of government into account when making the decision to transfer arms to them. Her findings support a neo-liberal view of arms transfers. Perkins and Neumeyer's research, on the other hand, would suggest otherwise, finding that human rights and democracy have little to

do with the decision, rather military alliances, geographical location, and historical trade ties play a larger role. Their findings support a more neo-realist view of arms transfers. Both Blanton's and Perkins' works focused on large samples of third world, or developing countries, during various time periods covering much of the 1980s through the early 2000s. However, their work never specifically addresses the MENA region by itself. My research focuses on this region during a more recent time period, 2000-2013, in order to see if their theoretical assumptions can be applied to the MENA and which assumptions provide the best understanding for the specific region.

Neo-liberal Theory

Blanton's research would suggest that mutual values, democratic governance and human rights play a significant role in determining whether or not the U.S. provides arms to other nations. Perkins and Neumayer suggest that established trade partnerships influence the decision to transfer arms. These specific aspects of neo-liberalism would suggest that there is a positive correlation between arms transfers and trade, democracy, civil and political liberties, and human rights. The assumption would mean that these factors foster an atmosphere of enduring cooperation amongst the U.S. and other states that prefers greater long-run benefits to attaining short-term, and specific, benefits more heavily related to security concerns.

H1: U.S. arms transfers to the MENA states are positively correlated and influenced by the recipient nations' democratic governance, political and civil liberties, and volume of trade.

Neo-Realist Theory

Perkins and Neumayer suggest that most neo-liberal factors such as democratic governance, civil liberties, and human rights do not affect the decision to trade arms with other nations. Instead, they argue that these factors play almost no role. They do argue that arms have been exported to serve the state's security interests. Recipient nation's military alliances with producing nations had a significant impact on whether or not arms were transferred. In addition to this, more capable recipient nation militaries were more likely to receive arms, as were those where the U.S. had a significant trade interest. Based on their study, military security agreements with recipient nations would suggest a neo-realist view of ensuring U.S. security is projected abroad. When paired with specific economic concerns in the region, the presence of significant security agreements in the MENA region would more strongly support the neo-realist assumption.

H2: U.S. arms transfers to the MENA states are positively correlated and influenced by the recipient nations' security arrangements with the U.S.

Section 4: Concepts, Definitions and Data

My research design is based off of previous research conducted by Blanton (2000, 2005) and Perkins and Neumayer (2010). Their studies made use of a regression analysis of a large n sample of third world and developing nations. My study is focused on a specific region, the MENA, which does not allow me to conduct a similar regression analysis. Instead, I conduct a comparison study of the nations in the region by using simple correlation tables and a method of agreement to determine which hypothesis most strongly supports the findings. I evaluate data

from all the countries that the U.S. transferred arms to between the years 2000-2013. I then separate the countries into three categories: MENA, NATO, and All¹. The countries are separated into categories to better analyze the data for the research area, and compare that data to the total number of countries and to a regional trade and defense area such as NATO. The analysis and comparison highlights similarities and differences between the MENA and other regions and countries. The primary data used, similar to the previous studies, will be arms transfers, trade, democratic governance, security agreements, and civil liberties. The variables are either similar or slightly modified from the previous works in order to facilitate a more specific understanding of what drives arms transfers to the region.

Dependent Variable:

Arms Transfers: Arms transfers are the dependent variable of the study. These will be evaluated in terms of monetary worth of conventional weapons platforms, such ships, planes, and weapons systems, which are transferred from the U.S. to another nation. Arms sales will not include any transfer of nuclear technology or weaponry. I use data compiled from SIPRI (2014) just as Perkins and Neumayer did in their study. SIPRI compiles the annual amount of arms transfers from the U.S. to other countries using their Trend Indicator Value, or TIV. The TIV determines the monetary value of arms that were transferred on an annual basis. This is helpful because often agreements are announced or published in the form of an entire transaction. For example, if the U.S. agrees to an \$11 billion dollar agreement with another nation, the agreement is not to provide \$11 billion dollars worth of arms in a one-year period. Instead, the agreement may include providing arms in increments over a seven-year period. It is in these instances

¹ See Appendices 1 through 3 for by name lists of country categories

where the TIV is useful in evaluating what the cost of the arms transferred for any given year actually are. The TIVs used for this study are expressed in U.S. dollar amounts.

Independent Variables

Trade: Trade refers to the monetary amount, expressed in U.S. dollars, of trade conducted between the U.S. and the recipient nation on an annual basis. Trade is one of the variables also used by other scholars in their studies on arms transfers (Perkins and Neumayer 2010; Blanton 2000, 2005). My data is compiled using information from the World Bank (2014). The amount of trade between the U.S. and other nations may suggest whether the volume of trade conducted affects arms transfers.

Security Arrangements: This variable is a broad heading for three different variables. My variable differs with that of Perkins and Neumayer as I do more than just evaluate whether there is a military alliance between the U.S. and a recipient nation. I take this into consideration in the form of Collective Defense Agreements (CDA), but I also take into considerations whether the U.S. has a military base in the nation and whether there is a standing Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) present between the two nations. I use qualitative and quantitative data from multiple sources to establish the level of security arrangements. The Congressional Research Service (CRS) provides information regarding security arrangements that it has gathered into various reports. The CRS furnishes data on current and past SOFAs that have been agreed on between the U.S. and other nations (Mason 2009). SOFAs will either be counted as existing or not existing. Additionally, the CRS also furnish information on formal alliances and Collective Defense Agreements that the U.S. participates in (Garcia and Mason 2009; "Treaties in force

(Online)" 2013; *Collective Defense Agreements* 2014). This will also be counted as either existing or not. Finally, the Department of Defense furnishes a base structuring report that will be used to determine whether or not a U.S. military base is present in a recipient nation ("Department of Defense Base Structure Report: Fiscal Year 2008 Baseline (A Summary of DoD's Real Property Inventory)" 2008).

Regime Type: Regime type refers to the type of government in place for recipient nations (Toombs and Smith 2012; Schraeder et al. 1998). Regime type will be determined as either democratic or non-democratic by using qualitative data furnished by the Freedom House List of Electoral Democracies (2014). I will not differentiate between different types of democracies or republics. I will instead differentiate between recipient governments who either have a democratic form of government or do not. It is important to note that I will define the government based off what it was for the majority of the studied period. For example, Tunisia is currently considered an electoral democracy as of 2012. However it was not prior. Therefore I define Tunisia as a non-democracy since it was not considered one for the majority of researched time period.

Freedom: Previous work focused heavily on the level of human rights protections that recipient nations had (Blanton 2000, 2005; Perkins and Neumayer 2010). I substitute their variable for one that measures the level of civil and political freedoms present in arms-receiving nations as the variable, freedom. The logic for this substitution is that a country with a positive score for an individual citizen's level of political and civil liberties should reflect a positive record of maintaining basic human rights. A negative score, on the other hand, may reflect a higher

propensity for the nation to exercise human rights violations. The nation's score does not mean that it violates human rights, however it does suggest that the possibility for these violations is stronger in countries that are less free. I use the scoring system of free, not free, or partly free from the Freedom House Freedom of the World Survey(2014) to measure the level of freedom. This survey works well because it does not rate the governments that are in charge; rather it rates the real-world rights and freedoms that individuals are able to enjoy in their countries. This provides a useful score that is not skewed by governments' official policies and open statements that fail to reflect the reality on the ground. Similar to the regime type variable, I define freedom based off the values provided for the majority of the studied period.

Section 5: Empirical Evidence and Analysis

This section provides the analysis of the data that has been collected. Various methods are used in order to help create a clearer picture of the relationships between arms transfers and the independent variables. The analysis has been conducted focusing on the MENA region specifically, as well as on NATO countries and the total number of countries that the U.S. has transferred arms to as reported by SIPRI for the time period studied. The comparisons provide an understanding of which correlations are alike and which are different when focusing on the MENA.

The MENA region boasts some interesting statistical figures when compared to NATO and all the countries combined. The average value of arms transfers to the MENA region is significantly higher, by over \$500 million, when compared to NATO and when compared to all arms recipients together. The dollar amount of total transfers within the studied time period is

Table 1: Summary of Arms Transfer Data (in millions)

Group	Mean	Median	SD	Min	Max
MENA	1847	616	2316	24	7357
NATO	1156	421	1525	0	5428
All	1005	140	1904	0	11153

Displaying general statistical data for arms transfers
Data Source: SIPRI TIV (2000-2013)

also higher when compared to NATO countries. The U.S. has historical trade ties and security arrangements with NATO and a fair expectation would be to see greater arms transfer values to it. The data in Table 1 suggests that there is something unique about the MENA region and the U.S. arms transfers to the region. The following areas evaluate the relationship of arms transfers with the variables.

Democracy and Civil/Political Liberties

Table 2 provides an analysis of the relationship between arms transfers and two other variables: democracy and civil/political liberties. The analysis is of all the countries that the U.S. transferred arms to during the studied time period. The variance between the variables is nearly split right down the middle. The variables of democracy and liberties are just as abundant when observing the upper half of recipients as when observing the lower half. Additionally, the nations considered “Not Free” were just as likely to have received a higher value of arms transfers than a lower value. Democratic governments outweigh non-democracies by a

Table 2: Analysis of Arms Transfers and Liberties and Regime Type (Total)

Arms Trans.	# of countries	Democracies	Non Democracy	Free/Part Free	Not Free
> Median	49	33	16	37	12
< Median	48	32	16	37	11
Total	97	65	32	74	23

Evaluation of Arms Transfers using the median amount as a divide to display correlation between amount and regime type and freedoms
Source: SIPRI and Freedom House

substantial margin. 67% of arms transfer recipients have democratic governments. It appears that democracies have a higher chance of receiving arms, but democracies do not necessarily receive a higher value of arms compared to non-democracies. Freedoms enjoyed in the recipient nations appear to be a better indicator than democracy. In addition, since 74 out of 97 recipient nations are either “Free” or “Partly Free”, it appears freedoms enjoyed in the recipient country may be a better indicator of the U.S.’s willingness to sell arms than their form of government.

A different pattern emerges when only the MENA countries are observed. Democracies and freedoms do not appear to affect the value of arms transfers that take place in that region.

Table 3 evaluates the same variables as Table 2, but only displays the information for MENA

nations. The overwhelming majority of MENA nations who receive arms have non-democratic governments and are considered “Not Free”. Another stark comparison can be made when considering arms transfers to NATO nations. All NATO recipients, 15 of 21 which are above the median value of arms transfers, have democratic governments and are “Free” or “Partly Free”. These variables appear have a higher impact on NATO recipient nations.

The analysis considering arms transfers to the MENA region suggests that democratic governance and civil/political freedoms do not play a role in the U.S.’s decision to transfer arms nor the execution of those transfers. The majority of the region enjoys a high value of arms transfers regardless of their government and freedoms resembling those found in the U.S. Analysis of other variables may point to another reason for the high volume observed when compared to other nations.

Table 3: Analysis of Arms Transfers and Liberties and Regime Type (MENA)

Arms Trans.	# of countries	Democracies	Non Democracy	Free/Part Free	Not Free
> Median	13	1	12	3	10
< Median	2	0	2	1	1
Total	15	1	14	4	11

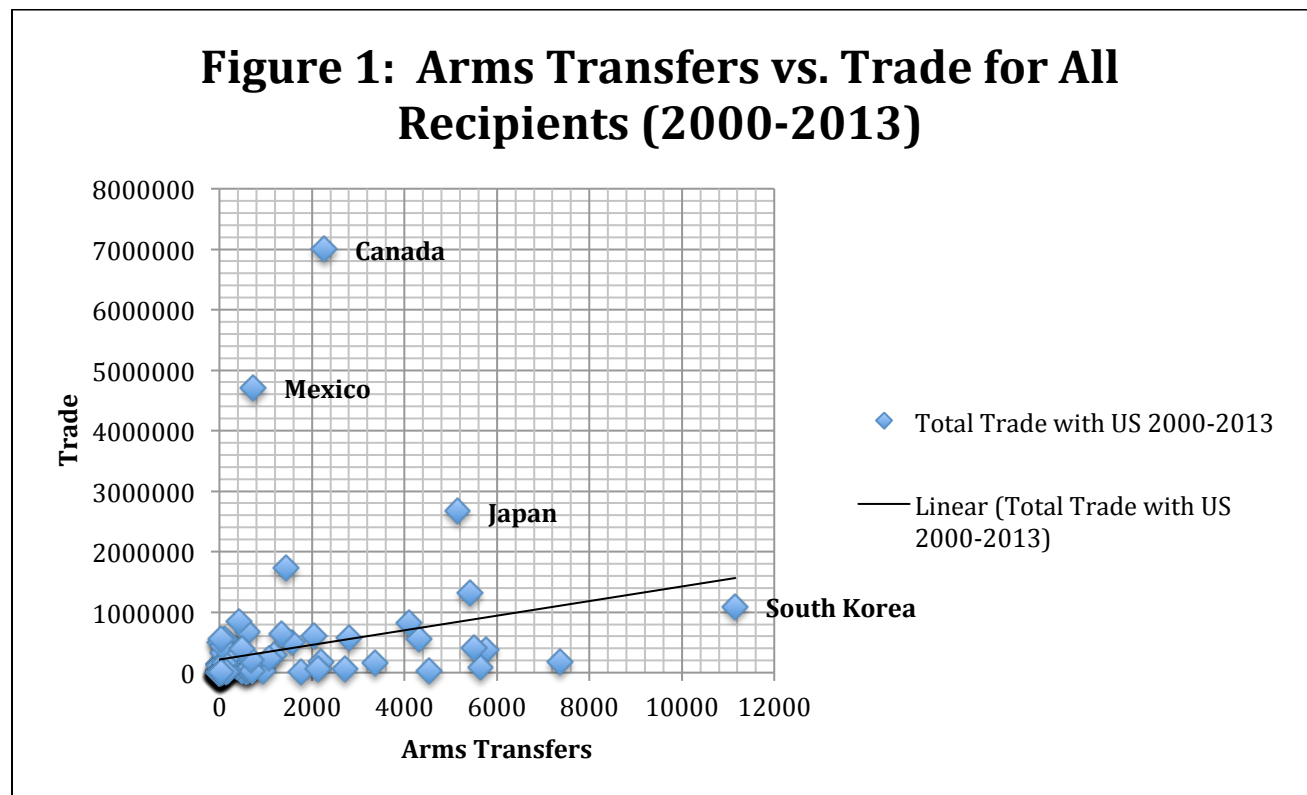
Evaluation of Arms Transfers using the median amount as a divide to display correlation between amount and regime type and freedoms. Uses the same median derived from observing all recipient nations.
Source: SIPRI and Freedom House

Trade

I use the data compiled by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (2014) and the World Bank to conduct a bivariate analysis to determine if there is a relationship between arms transfers and trade between the U.S. and recipient nations. Simple scatter plot graphs are

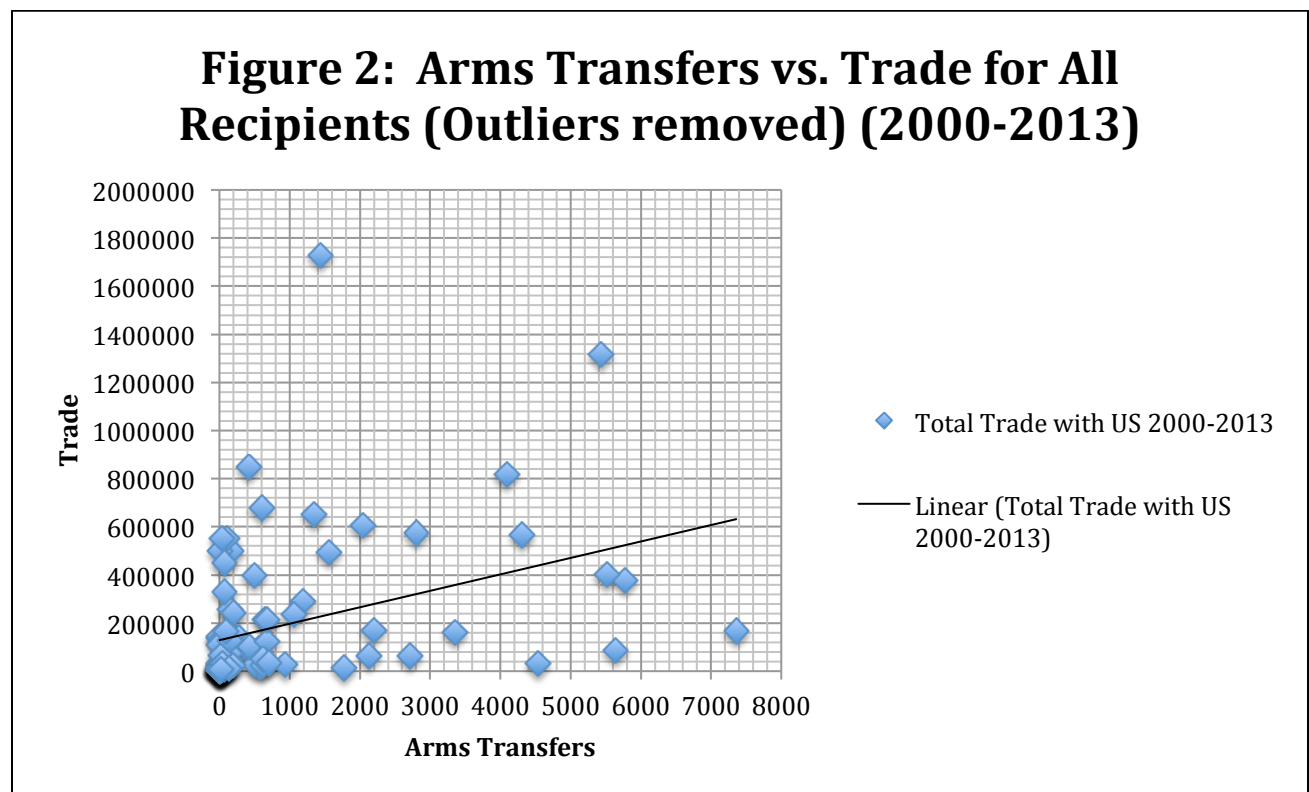
used to display a positive or negative correlation between the two variables. A linear line denotes possible correlation.

No significant correlation between arms transfers and trade can be made when analyzing the data for all the recipient nations as shown in Figure 1. There is a slight positive correlation, however there are outliers that affect the figure. Those outliers are traditional trading partners consisting of Canada, Mexico, and Japan; as well as South Korea, whose value of arms transfers sets it far apart from any other nation. The correlation becomes slightly more positive when those countries are removed. However, as Figure 2 shows, there are still a significant number of countries that have high trade with the U.S. but do not receive many arms, and countries that receive a high amount of arms but have little trade with the U.S. Therefore, the relationship between trade and arms transfers appears to be statistically weak.



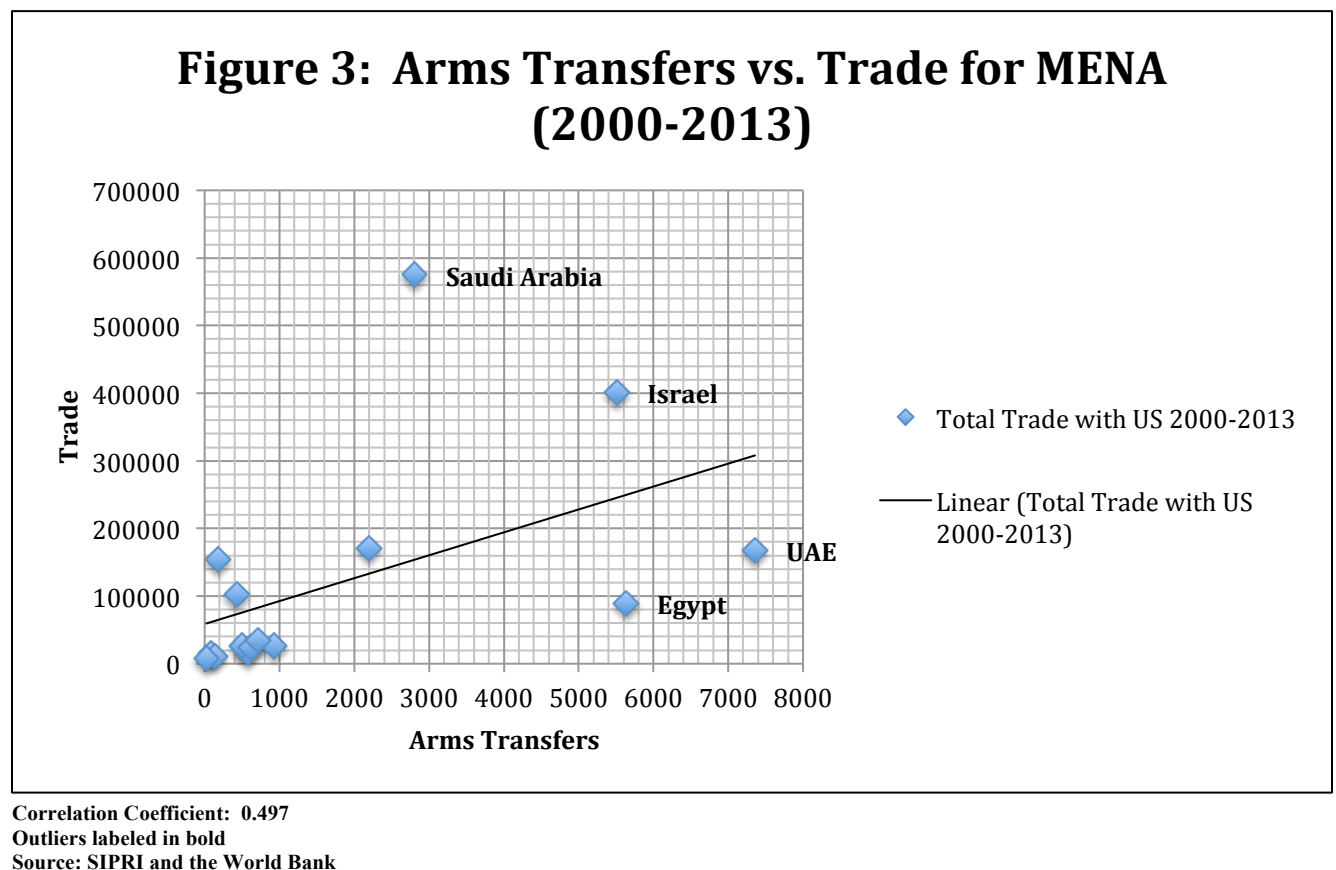
Correlation Coefficient: 0.254
Outliers labeled in bold
Source: SIPRI and the World Bank

Isolating the data to include figures of nations in the MENA region provides a different observation. Data displayed in Figure 3 indicates a higher positive correlation between the two variables. Of note however are four particular outliers consisting of the nations Egypt, Israel, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates. These outliers exhibit extremely high trade values and arms transfer values when compared to the other MENA nations that receive arms. The positive correlation increases slightly with these outliers taken into account and removed from the analysis, an increase of 0.037. Unfortunately the sample numbers of countries that receive arms in the MENA region are small and the correlation analysis may be inhibited due to this. However, it is still of note to observe that trade and arms transfers in the region are positively correlated and may suggest a small causal relationship.



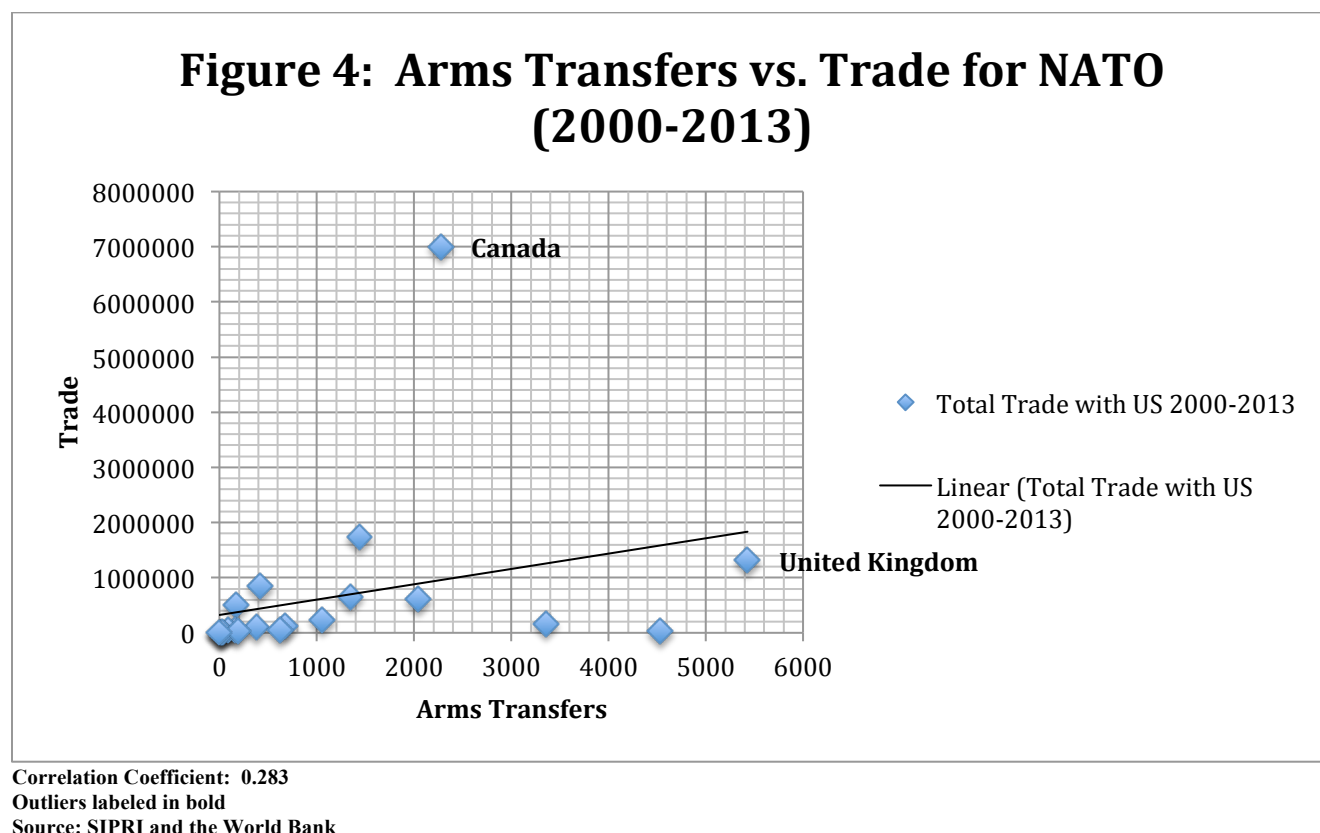
Correlation Coefficient: 0.372
Source: SIPRI and the World Bank

Lastly, the correlation between arms transfers and trade when observing the NATO countries is more closely aligned with the findings of Figure 1. A positive correlation can be observed in Figure 4, however there are also outliers present which, when taken out of the analysis, lowers the positive relationship by 0.118. The two outliers are Canada, which enjoys a high level of trade but small level of arms transfers, and the United Kingdom, which has an arms transfer value close to \$1 billion USD higher than the next highest nation, Greece. The correlation, although positive, does not appear to be causal between arms transfers and trade in NATO countries. Countries with high trade values such as Germany and Canada receive a low level of arms transfers, while countries such as Turkey and Greece observe the opposite.



The highest positive correlation between the variable of arms transfers and trade are observed in the MENA region. The MENA region has a small sample of nations however that

are heavily influenced by outlier nations. Yet, the positive correlation is significant given that it is almost twice as much as the correlations observed in NATO countries and within the total nation sample of countries receiving U.S. arms transfers. The relationship between trade and arms transfers in the MENA region would suggest a possibility that they influence each other.



Security Agreements

Security agreements between the U.S. and recipient nations are analyzed by observing the number of Status of Forces Agreements (SOFA), U.S. military bases, and Collective Defense Agreements (CDA) that the U.S. has with them. Table 4 provides an overview taking all recipient nations into account. Security agreements appear to be correspondent with the upper half of arms transfer recipients. More than half those above the median contain a U.S. military base on their soil, while a larger number contain a SOFA and/or a CDA as well. SOFAs and

CDAAs are also evident when observing nations below the median, however only two nations in that group contain a U.S. military base. Security agreements appear to become much more prevalent, and perhaps significant, when observing all recipient nations.

Table 4: Analysis of Arms Transfers and Security Agreements (Total)

Arms Trans.	Countries	SOFA	U.S. Military Bases	Collective Defense Agreements
> Median	49	31	25	27
< Median	48	24	2	16
Total	97	55	27	43

Evaluation of Arms Transfers using the median amount of \$140 million USD as a divide to display correlation between amount and security agreements

Source: SIPRI, DoD Base Structure Report, Congressional Research Service, Collective Defense Agreements

Table 5 provides security agreement data for the MENA region. It is displayed in a descending order of arms transfer values in order to observe any relationships between the amount of arms transfers and security agreements. Of interest is that almost half of the nations in the region receiving arms also contain a U.S. military base but none of the nations have a CDS with the U.S. All of the security agreements are found within nations that are above the median of total arms transfer values, but they do not necessarily correlate with the value of arms transfers. For example, Egypt is the second highest recipient of arms transfers during the observed period. Yet, they don't have one security agreement with the U.S. Kuwait on the other hand is just above the median value of arms transfers and has both a SOFA and a military base. Each country in the Persian Gulf region of MENA, with the exception of Yemen, contain a U.S. military base and a SOFA regardless of how high the value of arms transfers are.

Table 5: Analysis of Arms Transfers and Security Agreements (MENA)				
Country	Total Arms Sales from 2000-2013	SOFA	U.S. Bases	Collective Defense Agreement
UAE	7357	1	1	0
Egypt	5642	0	0	0
Israel	5512	1	0	0
Saudi Arabia	2804	1	1	0
Iraq	2196	1	0	0
Morocco	933	0	0	0
Qatar	710	1	1	0
Oman	616	1	1	0
Bahrain	585	1	1	0
Jordan	500	1	0	0
Kuwait	425	1	1	0
Algeria	178	0	0	0
Tunisia	140	0	0	0
Lebanon	82	0	0	0
Yemen	24	0	0	0

Evaluation of Arms Transfers using the median amount of \$140 million USD as a divide to display correlation between amount and security agreements

Source: SIPRI, DoD Base Structure Report, Congressional Research Service, Collective Defense Agreements

NATO countries provide a stark contrast to MENA, however an expected one, as shown in Table 6. NATO was established, in part, as a Collective Defense Agreement to provide a united front against the spread of communism in the post World War II era. Thus, all nations that are part of NATO have a CDA and a SOFA with the U.S. Additionally, 12 of 21 nations contain a U.S. military base as well. Of interest is that all nations containing a military base are above the median of arms transfer values. The outlier countries that don't are Canada, France and the Czech Republic. Canada can be easily explained as it borders with the U.S. and the need

for a base within its borders was not a concern when establishing NATO. France however, is a peculiarity considering it is an historical ally of the U.S.

Security agreements appear to be one of the factors that go hand in hand with arms transfers in the majority of cases. That a large proportion of higher value arms transfer-receiving nations also have security agreements with the U.S. is evident, but it is not necessarily the rule.

Table 6: Analysis of Arms Transfers and Security Agreements (NATO)				
Country	Total Arms Sales from 2000-2013	SOFA	U.S. Bases	Collective Defense Agreement
United Kingdom	5428	1	1	1
Greece	4534	1	1	1
Turkey	3356	1	1	1
Canada	2273	1	0	1
Italy	2042	1	1	1
Germany (FRG)	1443	1	1	1
Netherlands	1346	1	1	1
Spain	1059	1	1	1
Norway	680	1	1	1
Portugal	621	1	1	1
France	421	1	0	1
Denmark	383	1	1	1
Romania	188	1	1	1
Belgium	172	1	1	1
Czech Republic	155	1	0	1
Hungary	82	1	0	1
Latvia	39	1	0	1
Lithuania	27	1	0	1
Estonia	13	1	0	1
Bulgaria	11	1	0	1
Slovenia	0	1	0	1

Evaluation of Arms Transfers using the median amount of \$140 million USD as a divide to display correlation between amount and security agreements

Source: SIPRI, DoD Base Structure Report, Congressional Research Service, Collective Defense Agreements

High values of arms transfers do not automatically preclude a security agreement with the recipient nation. The MENA region has some form of security agreement with the nations that make up the Middle East of the MENA. The North African and Levant regions of MENA are scarcer. As noted above, the Persian Gulf nations have both a SOFA and U.S. military bases suggesting that the Persian Gulf region specifically maybe of more interest to the U.S.'s security interests while also enjoying higher levels of arms transfers amongst some of the nations in that area. Even though there are no CDA in the MENA region, security agreements in the region suggest that they are a factor in relationship to arms transfers for such a small population of total arms recipients around the world.

Findings

The following observations can be made about the MENA region after analyzing the variables and their relationships with each other. First, in contrast to Blanton's (2000, 2005) argument, democratic governance and civil/political freedoms appear to have little influence on the decision to transfer arms to MENA nations. It is important to note that she did identify the Middle East as an outlier, and it would appear North African nations could be included into the same category. Only two of the nations have had an elected democratic government through the majority of the studied time frame. The majority of nations in the MENA region is considered "Not Free" and continues to receive substantial amounts of arms from the U.S.

Second, in accordance with Perkins and Neumayer (2010), trade may be positively correlated with arms transfers in the MENA region. There is a positive correlation between arms transfers and trade that would support this argument. However, there are also outlier nations that do not support the argument. Taking individual nations into account may lead to a clearer

answer as to how important trade is with a recipient nation versus the argument that this relationship is separate from the decision to transfer arms.

Third, although not noticed across every country, there are significant security agreements with many of the recipient countries in the MENA region, the majority being located within the Persian Gulf area. Higher values of arms transfers do not always correlate with security agreements, as with Egypt, but given the size of the sample, an argument can be further explored that nations with security agreements can expect some level of arms transfers above the observed median value. This observation would closely align itself with the findings of Perkins and Neumayers (2010) who found that military alliances were influential in deciding whether to transfer arms.

The data does not support hypothesis 1 that democratic governments with similar values to the U.S. would be more likely than other non-democratic governments in the MENA to receive arms. The data does support hypothesis 1 when it observes the relationship between trade and arms transfers in the MENA. However, the positive correlation may be easily influenced by the presence of significant outlier nations who have high trade and low arms transfers, or low trade and high arms transfers. Further research is necessary in order to evaluate what is being traded between the U.S. and countries in the region. For example, is oil and natural gas the main export from MENA countries to the U.S? In this case, the U.S. may view the acquisition of those resources as vital to its security. However, the trade relationship may more heavily support a neo-liberal theory if some other commodity is being exported at a higher volume than the natural resources.

The data supports hypothesis 2 that arms transfers are positively correlated with security agreements in the MENA region. This support is not inclusive to every country in the region,

but as a whole there are positive correlations between arms transfers and security agreements, especially when observing the Persian Gulf nations. Future research may expand on the varying tools involved in Security Cooperation and use variables that I did not include in my research. For example, I did not evaluate the level of joint training exercises between the U.S. and other nations, nor the level of international military exchange programs, preferring to focus on aspects that involve the presence of U.S. troops and the open agreement to fight alongside a country.

The analysis suggests that the decision to transfer arms to the MENA region is one that is more closely aligned with U.S. economic and security interests than with a desire to reward those governments with values similar to the U.S. Previous studies have attempted to understand why and how the U.S. decides to transfer its arms to other nations. There has been debate over the reasons and prerequisites. However, there have been no studies focusing on the MENA region specifically. My contribution to the ongoing discussion of arms transfers has been focused on the MENA region and provided comparisons to countries in the NATO alliance and comparisons to all other arms recipient nations.

Section 6: Conclusion

Countries in the Middle East and North Africa received over 27% of U.S. arms transfers between the years 2000-2013. This appears to be a continuing trend as the U.S. signed an \$11 billion USD arms deal with Qatar in 2014. Over a quarter of U.S. arms went to a region containing around 15% of arms recipients during the studied period. Most of the nations in the region do not share any political or ideological similarities with the U.S. There are few democracies and the majority of nations lack individual and political freedoms that are taken for

granted by U.S. citizens. In addition, the region is often the focal point of conflict and transnational terrorism.

Previous research and studies have attempted to identify reasons behind the decision of the U.S. to transfer arms to other countries. Some research suggests that nations with democratic institutions and positive human rights records are more likely to become recipient nations (Blanton 2005). Other research refutes this idea and takes a more realist approach to examining the reasoning behind transferring arms to other nations by the U.S. focusing instead on security and military alliances (Perkins and Neumayer 2010). There is no doubt that an economic incentive for weapons manufacturers exists, however the U.S. government is the decision maker when exporting arms abroad. A focused study on the MENA region is lacking when attempting to understand why the U.S. is exporting such a large volume of arms to the region.

The purpose of this research is to specifically focus on arms transfers to the MENA region to identify correlations between arms transfers and other variables. Correlations between arms transfers and regime type, freedoms, trade, and security agreements between the U.S. and recipient countries may help to identify reasons for why the U.S. is exporting arms to the MENA region. This study also attempts to identify any correlations that would support existing theories on arms transfers in order to better understand the diplomatic relationship between the U.S. and the MENA countries.

Democratic forms of government, as well as individual and political freedoms, appear to have no effect on whether the U.S. transfers arms to the nations in the MENA. A good argument could be made that these variables would have a negative effect for MENA countries since the majority of recipient nations lack democratic political institutions and are considered not free. This finding suggests that the U.S. is not concerned with transferring arms to countries that do

not share similar values or forms of government. This may be because some other factor has more import and ultimately bears more weight when the U.S. decides to transfer arms.

Trade could be one of the possible other factors. The correlation between trade and arms transfers in the MENA region is the highest correlation when comparing it with NATO and with all other arms recipients as a whole. The analysis suggests that trade levels may influence the U.S.'s decision to transfer arms within the region. However, the analysis does not imply causation. The relationship may be due to the abundance of natural gas and oil that is prevalent in much of the region, especially around the Persian Gulf. This relationship may suggest that the U.S. is willing to transfer arms to region in exchange for access to its natural resources.

Security agreements in the region imply that they may have a larger role than other factors in determining the decision to send arms. Well over half of the countries have some sort of security agreement with the U.S. Six of the countries have an actual U.S. military base being used on their soil. The initial research question asked whether or not there was a correlation between arms transfers and security agreements. The data suggests that there is. Security agreements and U.S. military presence in the region, especially in the Persian Gulf, could evidence that there is something strategically important to the U.S. within the region that not only requires the U.S. military, but also arming other nations with the help of the U.S. government. The possible reasons for U.S. interest are numerous and may include access to natural resources, the proximity to the Islamic Republic of Iran, and the threat of transnational terror originating in the region. Whatever the case, the MENA region has received well over a quarter of U.S. arms transfers over a thirteen-year period and one of the most significant correlating factors is the presence of security agreements between recipient nations and the U.S.

This research observed the variables of trade and security agreements in a broad sense. Trade was observed as the total amount of trade conducted between recipient nations and the U.S. The research did not attempt to analyze what percentages of trade were from natural resources or other commodities. Future research may wish to analyze this variable in a more detailed fashion in order to ascertain whether specific aspects of trade have more influence on the amount of arms.

Security agreements were observed by analyzing three factors consisting of Collective Defense Agreements, Status of Forces Agreements, and the presence of U.S. military installations. Other factors may provide a clearer insight into the influences that security agreements have such as joint training agreements between the U.S. and recipient nation forces, diplomatic agreements such as the peace treaties between Israel and other MENA countries, or other aspects of the U.S.'s Security Cooperation efforts in the region.

For the purposes of this research, it would be fair to assume that security agreements and trade relations play a larger role in determining whether the U.S. transfers arms to the MENA region. The findings contradict previous studies that imply that democratic institutions, human rights records, and individual freedoms are factored into the decision making process of providing arms to other countries. There appears to be no room for democracy and liberties in the MENA arms bazaar. Instead, security and economic concerns may be better indicators when observing the U.S. decision-making process to transfer arms to the MENA region.

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Appendix 1: All Nations Receiving Arms from the U.S.

Afghanistan	Honduras	Serbia
Algeria	Hungary	Singapore
Angola	India	Slovenia
Argentina	Indonesia	South Africa
Australia	Iraq	South Korea (ROK)
Austria	Ireland	Spain
Azerbaijan	Israel	Sri Lanka
Bahrain	Italy	Sweden
Bangladesh	Jamaica	Switzerland
Belgium	Japan	Taiwan (ROC)
Bolivia	Jordan	Thailand
Botswana	Kazakhstan	Tunisia
Brazil	Kenya	Turkey
Brunei	Kuwait	UAE
Bulgaria	Latvia	United Kingdom
Cameroon	Lebanon	Venezuela
Canada	Lithuania	Yemen
Central African Republic	Macedonia	
Chad	Malaysia	
Chile	Malta	
Colombia	Mexico	
Congo	Morocco	
Costa Rica	Namibia	
Croatia	Netherlands	
Czech Republic	New Zealand	
Denmark	Niger	
Dominican Republic	Nigeria	
DR Congo	Norway	
Ecuador	Oman	
Egypt	Pakistan	
El Salvador	Panama	
Equatorial Guinea	Paraguay	
Estonia	Peru	
Finland	Philippines	
France	Poland	
Gabon	Portugal	
Georgia	Qatar	
Germany (FRG)	Romania	
Ghana	Saudi Arabia	
Greece	Senegal	

Appendix 2: MENA Nations Receiving Arms from the U.S.

Algeria
Bahrain
Egypt
Iraq
Israel
Jordan
Kuwait
Lebanon
Morocco
Oman
Qatar
Saudi Arabia
Tunisia
UAE
Yemen

Appendix 3: NATO Nations Receiving Arms from the U.S.

Belgium	Slovenia
Bulgaria	Spain
Canada	Turkey
Czech Republic	United Kingdom
Denmark	
Estonia	
France	
Germany (FRG)	
Greece	
Hungary	
Italy	
Latvia	
Lithuania	
Netherlands	
Norway	
Portugal	
Romania	